

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A composition comprising the tannate of an opioid.
2. The composition of claim 1 wherein the opioid is selected from the group consisting of alfentanil, buprenorphine, butorphanol, carfentanil, cocaine, codeine, dezocine, diacetylmorphine, dihydrocodeine, dihydromorphine, diphenoxylate, diprenorphine, etorphine, fentanyl, heroin, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, β -hydroxy-3-methylfentanyl, levo- α -acetylmethadol, levorphanol, lofentanil, meperidine, methadone, morphine, nalbuphine, nalmeferene, o-methylnaltrexone, naloxone, naltrexone, oxycodone, oxymorphone, pentazocine, pethidine, propoxyphene, remifentanil, sufentanil, tilidine and tramadol.
3. The composition of claim 2 wherein the opioid is selected from the group consisting of codeine, diacetylmorphine, dihydrocodeine, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, meperidine, methadone, morphine, oxycodone, oxymorphone and propoxyphene.
4. The composition of claim 3 wherein the opioid comprises hydrocodone.
5. The composition of claim 3 wherein the opioid comprises oxycodone.
6. The composition of claim 3 further comprising acetaminophen.
7. The composition of claim 7 further comprising aspirin and caffeine.
8. An analgesic composition comprising a pharmaceutically effective amount of an active ingredient comprising an opioid as claimed in claim 1

9. The analgesic composition of claim 8 in the form of an injectable solution, a tablet, a gel, a liquid suspension or a suppository.

10. The analgesic composition as claimed in claim 8 further comprising one or more expectorant, decongestant, antihistaminic, antitussive, and/or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory compositions.

11. A method for relieving pain in a human being that comprises administering to such human being a pharmaceutically effective amount of a composition as claimed in claim 1.

12. A method for preparing an opioid tannate that comprises reacting an opioid free base with tannic acid at a temperature of about 60 to about 150°C and thereafter recovering the resultant opioid tannate.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the opioid free base is employed in an amount of about 4 to about 8 moles of the freebase per mole of tannic acid.

14. The method of claim 12 wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of up to about 30 wt.% water.

15. The method of claim 12 wherein the resultant opioid tannate is milled to provide a free-flowing powder having a particle size in the range of about 50 to about 200 mesh.

16. A method for preparing an opioid tannate comprising the steps of:

- (1) contacting an opioid in the form of its free base with tannic acid in the presence of water at a maximum temperature that will not cause decomposition of the opioid tannate to an extent of greater than about 10 wt.%, based on the weight of the opioid tannate;
- (2) allowing the opioid to remain in contact with the tannic acid in the

presence of water for a period of time ranging from about 5 minutes to about 24 hours at said maximum temperature; and

- (3) freeze-drying the opioid tannate resulting from step (2) at a temperature and at a reduced pressure such that (i) at least about 80 wt.% of the water is removed from the opioid tannate and (ii) decomposition of the opioid tannate will be limited to a maximum of about 10 wt.%, based on the weight of the opioid tannate.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the opioid free base is employed in an amount of about 4 to about 8 moles of the free base per mole of tannic acid.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein steps (1) and (2) are carried out at a temperature in the range of about 20 to about 85°C.

19. The method of claim 16 wherein step (3) is carried out at a pressure of not greater than about 500 milliTorre and at a temperature in the range of about -60°C to about -20°C.

20. The method of claim 16 wherein the opioid tannate from step (3) is milled to provide a free-flowing powder having a particle size in the range of about 50 to about 200 mesh.